



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

**Friday, February 17, 2012**

Pages 487 - 514

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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(Nunakput)

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**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>487</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>487</b>
23-17(2) – The Wise Women of 2012 (B. McLeod) .....	487
24-17(2) – 2001 – Zero Driving and Boating Fatalities (Ramsay) .....	487
25-17(2) – 2012 Arctic Winter Games (R. McLeod) .....	488
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>488</b>
Acknowledging the 2012 Arctic Winter Games Athletes from Mackenzie Delta (Blake) .....	488
Congratulations to the 2012 Arctic Winter Games Athletes and Coaches from Hay River (Bouchard).....	489
Tobacco Tax Collection (Dolynny) .....	489
“Thank You for Making a Difference” Teacher Recognition Program (Bisaro) .....	490
A New Energy Policy (Bromley).....	490
Proposed Public Housing Rent Scale Effect on Seniors (Yakeleya).....	491
Contribution of Small Businesses in Nahendeh (Menicoche) .....	491
Congratulations to the Wise Women 2012 (Moses).....	492
Issues Affecting the Deh Cho Constituency (Nadli) .....	492
Emergency Protection Order Relief (Hawkins) .....	493
Grand Opening of Chief Jimmy Bruneau Community Library (Lafferty) .....	493
Spring Carnivals in the Beaufort-Delta (R. McLeod).....	494
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>494, 506</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>495</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>495</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>506</b>
<b>MOTIONS</b> .....	<b>506</b>
2-17(2) – Old Age Security (Menicoche).....	506
3-17(2) – Aboriginal Languages Secretariat (Yakeleya) .....	508
<b>FIRST READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>512</b>
Bill 3 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012 .....	512
Bill 4 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012.....	512
<b>SECOND READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>512</b>
Bill 3 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012 .....	512

Bill 4 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012.....	512
<b>THIRD READING OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>513</b>
Bill 3 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012 .....	513
Bill 4 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012.....	513
<b>PROROGATION .....</b>	<b>513</b>

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, February 17, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 10:07 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good morning, colleagues. It is with great pleasure today and an honour to have with us today both of our Legislative Assembly's honorary table officers. We have with us today Mr. Dave Hamilton, former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

----Applause

And Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford, also known as Tony –

---Applause

– former Speaker of the Assembly. The stars certainly must be aligned today, colleagues. It is an honour to have both gentlemen here with us as our table officers. Item 2, Ministers' statements.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 23-17(2):  
THE WISE WOMEN OF 2012**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day on March 8th is a global day of celebration to honour women's advancement towards equality in all areas of life.

In the Northwest Territories, the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories celebrates International Women's Day by hosting the Wise Women Awards and celebrating the winners with the Bread and Roses Luncheon in the Great Hall of our Assembly. This year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wise Women Awards.

These women are role models in their communities and provide volunteer, counselling and caregiver service to others. The awards recognize their advocacy work and other efforts to improve the status of women in the Northwest Territories.

It is my great pleasure to announce recipients of the Wise Women Awards for 2012:

Beaufort-Delta – Greta Sittichinli  
Sahtu – Ethel Blondin-Andrew  
Deh Cho – Margaret Vandal  
South Slave – Therese (Dollie) Simon

North Slave/Tlicho – Marsha Argue

The council is celebrating this milestone with the publication of a booklet honouring present and past recipients. With this year's recipients, 93 women have been awarded the Wise Women designation since 1992.

I extend this Assembly's congratulations to the recipients and our appreciation for their lifetime works for the betterment of families and northern communities. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 24-17(2):  
2011 – ZERO DRIVING AND BOATING  
FATALITIES**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of our people is a priority for each of us here. I rise today to give you an example of what we can accomplish when individuals take up the challenge to be safer every day and make smart choices.

Prevention, education and awareness are priorities for this Assembly and the work is showing encouraging results. The year 2011 was a very safe year on our roads, trails and waterways. For the first time on record, there were no fatal collisions. There were no pedestrians or snowmobilers killed. No one was involved in a fatal ATV collision. And there were no drownings.

Moreover, the number of severe injuries related to vehicle collisions in 2011 was the lowest ever. You can, in fact, count them on one hand. All of this is good news and Northwest Territories residents can be proud of these safety records.

We can continue this positive trend by wearing our seatbelts, ensuring our children are properly restrained in an infant car seat, child car seat or booster seat, driving without distractions, and wearing our helmets while riding bicycles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and skateboards. When on the water, we need to be wearing our lifejackets, instead of leaving them on the floor of the boat.

And while I am mentioning the importance of wearing lifejackets, I want to acknowledge the enormous contribution by the Member for Weledeh during the filming for our Drowning Prevention

program. I know that his willingness to speak on camera about his personal tragedy, the account of how a lifejacket saved his life while his father and a family friend perished, touched the hearts of everyone who saw it. I applaud his courage and I want to acknowledge and thank him for that service.

Drive Alive, the department's public awareness and safety information program, will continue to remind us all to make smart safe choices throughout the year through campaigns such as Leave the Phone Alone and Buckle Up NWT.

At the same time, the department will continue to make improvements to the transportation system that will help keep travellers safe such as increasing signage, straightening and widening our highways and installing guardrails. The department will also continue to improve surface conditions and inform the travelling public of road conditions more quickly, efficiently and effectively.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating NWT residents for contributing to the success in 2011, and committing to safe travel and recreation in 2012. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 25-17(2): 2012 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. This year the games are being held from March 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Since 1970, the Arctic Winter Games have been bringing people from the circumpolar region together every two years for a celebration of sport and culture. We are proud to once again participate in this event.

This year more than 970 athletes from 26 communities tried out for Team NWT during the territorial trials. Of that number, 680 participants were from outside Yellowknife, confirming that there is broad interest and excitement for the Arctic Winter Games across the territory.

Team NWT, composed of 350 players, coaches and managers, will join over 1,900 other participants from the teams that will represent Alaska, Yukon, Alberta North, Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik-Quebec, Sapmi and Yamal.

I would like to thank the Sport North Federation, their member organizations, the regional coordinators and the countless volunteers who organized the regional and territorial trials selection process. Their collective efforts have once again made it possible for young athletes to participate in

sport and to be connected to a special event like the Arctic Winter Games.

I would also like to thank the Aboriginal Sport Circle, the NWT Parks and Recreation Association, the Beaufort-Delta Sahtu Recreation Association, the Mackenzie Recreation Association, community recreation workers as well as the physical education teachers in NWT schools, who along with parents and volunteers provide the sport and recreation opportunities at the local level, that give our young people that first step towards trying out for the Arctic Winter Games.

The whole process of selecting and sending a team to the Arctic Winter Games supports the goals of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly related to sustainable, vibrant, safe communities.

I also wish to profile our new NWT youth ambassadors who are accompanying Team NWT to Whitehorse where they will make their contribution to the celebration of northern culture and sport excellence.

The Youth Ambassador Program is founded on the principle that a guided and structured volunteer experience throughout the year, coupled with volunteer participation in major events, can develop significant life and job skills and build the confidence necessary for youth to deal with complex challenges.

As part of our commitment to the development of youth leadership and increasing volunteer capacity in our youth, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is sending 24 youth ambassadors to volunteer with the host society.

These young leaders are busy preparing for their meaningful roles during the games and I know they will proudly represent their communities and the NWT.

I invite all Members to join me in wishing Team NWT and the NWT youth ambassadors the very best of luck at the 2012 Arctic Winter Games.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

#### Members' Statements

##### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGING THE 2012 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES ATHLETES FROM MACKENZIE DELTA

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the 2012 Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse, Yukon, and congratulate the athletes that have been training to win their spot on Team NWT to represent the Northwest Territories.

We have such programs in place to help our athletes compete at national levels. We offer

financial contributions for athletes who need the extra training and we have endless amounts of resource material to assist our athletes in becoming the best they can be.

I have so much pride in acknowledging athletes that are coming out of the Mackenzie Delta riding. Please let me congratulate 41 Arctic Winter Games participants. From Aklavik: four Dene Games athletes, one ski biathlon athlete, eight cultural performers, two female hockey players, one juvenile dog musher. From Fort McPherson: two Dene Games athletes, two snowshoers, three cross-country skiers, four snowshoe biathlon athletes. From Tsiigehtchic: one Dene Games athlete. There is a total of nine coaches and staff from the Mackenzie Delta.

It gives me more pride to mention today that one of our respected elders in Fort McPherson, 81-year-old Mrs. Jane Charlie Sr., has supported her children and grandchildren throughout their years of growing up in all aspects of sports. She has attended many hockey tournaments and cheered on the sidelines for various other sports for members of her family. As a result of the extra support and encouragement, Mrs. Jane Charlie has five of her children coaching for Arctic Winter Games and six grandchildren were participating: one in dog mushing, two in Dene Games, one in female hockey, one in snowshoeing and one in snowshoe biathlon, and she has one female great-grandchild participating in female hockey.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, please join me in congratulating a fine supporter of active living and promoting fair play, Mrs. Jane Charlie from Fort McPherson.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
2012 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES ATHLETES  
AND COACHES FROM HAY RIVER

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to congratulate the 33 participants from Hay River who will be attending the Arctic Winter Games from March 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. I'd also like to thank all the coaches that helped them get there and those coaches that are helping them participate at the games.

Along with a few Members here at the Legislative Assembly, I have the honour of being a former member of the Arctic Winter Games team. I'd like to encourage all the athletes out there to go for gold, but remember to have fun, and go Team NWT!

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
TOBACCO TAX COLLECTION

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tobacco is bad, period. We all agree that cigarettes contain known carcinogens that cost our health care systems millions of dollars annually. What kills me even more is that I don't think we're collecting all our taxes on this product, because I believe we have an open door in the tobacco tax collection process itself that is half open, and this half-open door could be potentially exploited. I will attempt to walk the Members here today down a very complex path in tobacco tax collection.

To start, there are a myriad of terms thrown in the collection of tax for tobacco such as Black Stock Tobacco, Alberta tax memos, tax rebates, tax rebate requests, treasury division, and wholesale dealer permits are just a few terms of the process. Placing all these terms together in a flowchart, you soon have yourself a very convoluted spaghetti chart. As complex as it may be, there is a flaw in this system that is easily identifiable.

The Minister of Finance is aware of this discovery, and I wish to thank him for his patience and his thoroughness with his investigation when I brought it forward. Furthermore, I am more than certain that the Minister will stand here before you today and indicate that all is okay, that hours were spent to obtain adequate evidence to assure that tobacco taxes were being remitted properly to the NWT.

The Minister may be accurate in his assumptions, but to be fair, providing assurances that the total tax revenues being collected are reasonable with the use of national averages for smoking rates are not, in my mind, the numbers we should be trusting. I think the people of the NWT deserve the utmost confidence that our tax collection system is foolproof and without the potential doorway of exploitation. Without the proper physical audits, this assumption with the use of smoking averages is futile.

Simply put, the Alberta tax memos that account for the tax being paid in Alberta are not the area of concern. These are audited and balanced throughout the purchase cycle from wholesaler to retailer. Where things get confusing are the means in which the self-reporting practice occurs for the GNWT tax portion and remittance. Admittedly, this is not an electronic submission but, rather, a manual remittance, hence self-reporting and the potential flaw in the system.

I will have further questions today for the Minister of Finance in asking him how we can close this potential loophole which could be costing the GNWT significant money in lost tax revenues.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
"THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE"  
TEACHER RECOGNITION PROGRAM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was an exciting visit to the House yesterday by the N.J. Macpherson Grade 5's and I think we had a very successful Anti-Bullying Day in the House.

I'd like to remind everyone that next week is NWT Education Week. During the last 15 years, a very positive initiative has been run by the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Northern News Services and First Air. They have all partnered to run a teacher recognition program called Thank You for Making a Difference.

Every January through to mid-February, students and former students across the NWT have the opportunity to submit a nomination about an educator who has made a difference in their lives. Two names are drawn, and the teachers win an airplane pass and the nominating student wins a laptop computer.

The great thing about this initiative is that although only members of the NWTTA can win the trip, all educators who receive recognition from former students get a copy of the nomination. Every year nominations pour in for current and former teachers, and it's tangible proof of the message in this statement: Research has proven over and over again that the single most important factor in a child's success in school is a teacher who cares.

Over the last 14 years there have been more than 18,000 nominations submitted, all thanking an educator who's made a difference to one of their students. Nominations have come from all ages of students, from a few words printed in smelly markers to long, heart-felt testimonies from former students struggling. In the first year of the program there were 26 submissions. This year there were 2,000.

I'd like to quote one example: "I like my teacher, because when I was in Grade 5 I was failing, but she said I don't want to see you in summer school. I think you're very smart. So I said, you're right. I am smart. After that I changed." An age 11 student.

The awards ceremony for the Thank You for Making a Difference campaign is next Friday here in the Great Hall, I believe.

Yesterday all Ordinary Members delivered statements dealing with the impact of bullying on our students in schools, our communities and our society. We know schools are doing their part to combat bullying and family violence, and we know that teachers can indeed make a difference.

I'd like to take this time and this opportunity to thank the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, Northern News Services and First Air for this

worthwhile initiative. Most of all, I'd like to thank all those teachers who every day make a difference in the lives of students across the NWT. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
A NEW ENERGY POLICY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The biggest factor in cost of living and economic development is the cost and availability of energy. Yet, in terms of progressive energy policy, we are so misled by the use of fossil fuels, which are costly and cause climate change, that we are missing the boat and the world is passing us by. What we do or don't do in energy policy and planning is pivotal to our success. Our challenges are clear: Skyrocketing cost of fossil fuels, dangerous climate changes, shrivelling community economies, fossil fuel subsidies 10 times that for renewable energy, and uncertain availability of fossil fuels. In fact, the International Energy Agency now admits peak conventional oil occurred six years ago and "current trends in energy supply and consumption are patently unsustainable economically, environmentally and socially."

Rather than accepting a fossil fuel future, jurisdictions the world over are switching to clean, abundant renewable sources proven feasible and commercially viable. How? Their secret is a simple but fundamental shift in perspectives. More than stepping away from our oil addiction, this is a commitment, a leap towards doing things better. Rather than a burden, it's a huge opportunity.

Astounding unforeseen successes have been achieved through both public and commercial generation of renewable energy propelled through advanced policy. One key component is a government requirement for power corporations to purchase renewable energy at a set, relatively high price, or feed-in tariff. This promotes a move from highly inefficient service focused on maximizing consumption of power based strongly on imported commercial fuel, to one focused on the most efficient use of power generated from local and non-commercial fuels. It rewrites the economics of energy reduction from top to bottom.

A second key element is a smart grid. A smart grid uses the digital technology of your iPhone or BlackBerry to measure the flow of energy in both directions, depending on whether it's being produced or consumed. This software also adjusts our appliances and energy sources to use or sell energy at times of day when it is either cheapest or most valuable, whichever gives the greatest benefit.

Tales of successes are building daily, but we need our own story to tell. The North is ripe for this approach because our energy prices are already so

high. The NWT cost of power is 70 cents per kilowatt hour and rapidly climbing.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** In contrast, jurisdictions where power rates are only 6 or 8 cents per kilowatt hour have required payments of 40 or 50 or 60 cents per kilowatt for wind, for solar, for biomass energy, and have turned their energy services around. Clearly, the potential for us to offer such prices for renewable energy and ultimately enjoy reduced costs is immediate. The annual GNWT subsidy for electricity is over \$14 million, up 40 percent from 2009-10 to 2010-11 and rising. Why continue such silliness when alternatives are available?

We could choose to continue our headlong pursuit of an inefficient fossil fuel-based path, accepting the many costs while enjoying the last gurgling years of the oil bubble, or we could make the leap to proven sustainable energy systems with thriving local economies and healthy land. Like so many individuals in the North are doing, and as so many communities and jurisdictions are doing, I suspect we can see the potential and will make that big shift. Once made, the experience of others is that the benefits and realities far outweigh the estimated potential when they began.

We need an advanced energy policy that truly supports Northerners and their futures. Let's get on with it. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED PUBLIC HOUSING RENT SCALE EFFECT ON SENIORS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with great interest to the Housing Minister yesterday when he announced the proposed plans for the NWT Housing Corporation. During the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, I was among one of the Members that pushed Mr. McLeod for an overhaul for the rent scales for the young people who want to work and get a fair chance to make it on their own. I did this because the so-called economic rent being charged was too high. Basically, if someone got a job, they would have to pay so much rent. They wouldn't have much money left for anything.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear, I did not ask the Minister to raise the rent for any seniors who live in public housing. These elders already have a hard time getting by. Many of them live in poverty or on the edge of poverty. It is not okay to raise the rent for our elders so we can lower the top rent scales in public housing. It shocks me that, after all he has heard in this House, it seems that this is what the Minister plans to do. The Minister

has already told us that his moratorium on eviction from public housing has not resulted in very many tenants making arrangements to pay back what they owe. Maybe in the future in the Sahtu, we are going to need a Betty House. I wonder why this is so, Mr. Speaker. It could be that those tenants don't have their money to pay back. Could it be that they have so little income that they have no hope of paying the Housing Corporation back? How many of these elders will be affected with this proposed plan? It is supposed to be implemented on July 1<sup>st</sup>. I don't have those answers, Mr. Speaker, but I sure hope we can talk to the Minister about that. Maybe there is still time to exempt elders from any rental increase. That is what should be done.

A few days ago I spoke about penalized elders. We have someone living with them in their houses. We have not yet fixed that problem. And now the Housing Corporation plans to raise the rent for some of our seniors. Are we going from bad to worse, Mr. Speaker? I think so.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NAHENDEH

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The small business sector is one of the most critical to the health of the economy, especially in the Nahendeh riding. Small businesses make great contributions to Nahendeh communities. Although the population is small, these communities are the scene of a surprising amount of activity.

The Liard River crossing is the second busiest river crossing in the Northwest Territories. The Nahanni National Park, with the NWT's highest mountains and largest glaciers, attracts close to 1,000 visitors every year. The oil and gas and mineral development is becoming increasingly important in the region.

Small businesses respond to the needs of a wide range of goods and services. Small businesses are community builders. They are owned and operated by people who invest in the community and make it their home. They offer employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities and valuable local knowledge. Many young people's first employers are the local, small business owners. Local apprenticeship opportunities help create a sense of pride in their work and in their town.

In the 2006 Deh Cho Regional Development Strategy, it highlighted small business as one of the key areas for development. ITI committed to make resources available to hold small business workshops, promote entrepreneurship, facilitate meetings between industry, business and Aboriginal organizations and provide business

owners with access to capital. Right now businesses in the Nahendeh region and the Deh Cho region make up only about 6 percent of all businesses in the NWT, but that will change as we look forward to future development of the Prairie Creek Mine and other developments in the southern Northwest Territories. There is a great potential for further small business development in forestry and agriculture. Our people and our small businesses are at the core of our economy. I ask the GNWT to continue to do all it can to help small businesses throughout the NWT and especially in the Nahendeh riding. I also would like to commend all the small business owners in my region and throughout the North for continuing to do their best for the residents of Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
WISE WOMEN 2012

**MR. MOSES:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I was very happy to read in the Inuvik Drum yesterday, recognition of the Wise Women Awards, specifically a former worker, Greta Sittichinli. Mr. Speaker, we're all here because of women in our lives that have supported us, that have encouraged us, motivated us. Women that are our mothers, our sisters, significant others, so that we can be sitting here today and assisting and leading the people of the Northwest Territories in providing good programs and services.

In my life as a worker in the public service, I've done a lot of good work and there's a lot of work that I'm very proud of that I can say we've put a lot of action to. I can say that a lot of those actions happened because of the women that I've worked with in terms of committees and the work that they did, and the drive that they had to make change and create action in the Northwest Territories.

My campaign team, actually, for me to get into the Legislative Assembly, was made up of pretty well all women who made things happen, who got out there, got the work done. For someone who didn't even have a campaign, they helped me to be who I am today.

Women have had a significant effect on my life in terms of being who I am today with the knowledge and experience that was provided to me. The Status of Women Council has been distributing an award, the Wise Women Award, since 1992 for the five regions in the Northwest Territories. The wise women recipients are role models who demonstrate wisdom, perseverance and dedication, while standing up for women, children and families in our

communities. They strive to make the North a better place to live, work and raise a family.

I'd like to take this moment to recognize one of those women: Greta Sittichinli. I've worked with her. She's done a lot of good work, she's one who has overcome adversity, who is a single mother, who goes above and beyond to make sure that the people of Inuvik thrive, and are healthy, and have opportunity to succeed and to live, much like all the other award recipients across the Northwest Territories. She's the go-to person who spends a lot of countless hours volunteering for the church so that people who are less fortunate get a chance to succeed.

At this time I'd like to celebrate all women across the Northwest Territories that are doing significant work and making a positive impact in their families, in their communities and across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ISSUES AFFECTING THE  
DEH CHO CONSTITUENCY

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here in this session, like my colleagues, I have supported the interim supplementary appropriations. Of particular significance was my support to the Inuvik to Tuk highway. While I realize that in the absence of industry activity in those areas of the North to create jobs and opportunity, the GNWT has an overall responsibility to serve the needs and interests of all Northerners.

It is with this in mind, I remind this House that my constituents in the Deh Cho still have some real needs in infrastructure and capital investment. I also encourage this House to support and encourage the continued progress of the Dehcho process negotiations. I understand the Government of Canada has a major role in land claims and self-government policies. The GNWT must ensure the interests of both the Dehcho and Northerners are addressed. The successful conclusion of those negotiations will only create a time of uncertainty and opportunities.

The communities that I represent, K'atl'odeeche, Enterprise, Kakisa and Fort Providence, are comprised of Dene, Metis and non-Aboriginals, like the rest of the Northwest Territories. We call these communities our home. Everything is not trampled, though, as we want it to be. My constituents have particular concerns and issues regarding health, housing, education and training, rates of crime and sometimes struggling to make ends meet. In the next few months I will be seeking support for the Deh Cho constituency.

I believe there are potential areas that this government and the Deh Cho communities could discuss. I'm confident that this House and government will continue its support of business growth. It plays a vital role in the life of our communities. I would like to see the continued progress towards a sustainable forest industry that could create jobs and opportunities in the Deh Cho and also the Northwest Territories.

I, too, would like to take an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, just to acknowledge the Wise Women Award for my community, Margaret Vandell, or Auntie Margaret, as we all know her. Margaret has been married to Norman and raised five boys. She's got grandchildren right now that she enjoys. She's heavily involved with the school, the Deh Gah School. In fact, there's a camp along the winter road they call the Ena's Camp. She is very active in traditional medicines. She's very active also in community gatherings and ceremonies. I'd like to take this opportunity to say mahsi and congratulate her.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. For May/June I'll remind the Members that Members' statements are one topic. But it's our last day here today. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER RELIEF

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've spoken in the past about protection against family violence and the emergency protection order. These orders are essential in protecting domestic violence victims and in many cases they are a very valuable tool in our society. I should make sure it's clear on the record that I have no issue, whether personally or in my pursuit on this topic, that we should take away EPOs. My concerns are based on the fact that they have to be built around and based solely on the truth. Which now brings me to the issue.

We have seen that emergency protection orders can be issued based on false information. When it happens, it causes great damage to the person who has been falsely accused. The falsely accused person even has to cover their own legal costs. Then they have to seek restitution from the courts themselves; again more costs. We have to really hope and pray that the restitution actually follows through, which in all cases, in my belief, is very unlikely.

We don't account for the mental duress or social duress placed on the falsely accused; yet another part that's ignored about this new-found victim. It is much the same the victim of perjury, liable or slander. All they want to do is seek civil remedies here with the support of the Department of Justice.

It is not fair that unintentional circumstances cause us to further penalize this new-found victim.

The Justice Minister, if you had heard earlier when I'd asked him to help me look for solutions, has now become the champion of the status quo. All I've asked for is a remedy so the falsely accused can help themselves. Their answer is: Go to court, and you pay, by the way.

I'm not a lawyer and I certainly don't have all the answers, but the problems are pretty obvious. We, as legislators, must work hard to make sure fairness is there for all citizens who go to court. The falsely accused are being railroaded by our system and someone has to stand up. I would have thought the Justice Minister would be one who would be interested in this.

Lady Justice may be known as being blind when it comes to choosing which side of justice, but I can tell you, she can clearly see that there is a wrong here.

Later today I will be asking questions to the Minister of Justice about the falsely accused and about what he can do to finally take some serious action on this particular issue, because we cannot stand for the falsely accused to become further victims.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GRAND OPENING OF CHIEF JIMMY BRUNEAU COMMUNITY LIBRARY

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

...reality, that's what happened here. The community of Behchoko wanted a public library, so community members worked together to find a solution. The solution was to provide public access to the existing library at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School. CJBS has always found ways to be innovative and creative.

Hours of operations are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday to Friday, and evenings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This is exciting news for the community of Behchoko and a great opportunity for community members to take advantage of the community library. I'd like to thank the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School staff, the resources and community members for coming up with this solution.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SPRING CARNIVALS IN THE  
BEAUFORT-DELTA

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start my Member's statement, I want to use this opportunity to wish my uncle Abel Tingmiak happy birthday. Abel is in his 60s and he's still flying around on the blanket toss.

Spring carnivals are just around the corner. Up in the Beaufort-Delta we're very fortunate that we've got four or five communities that are very closely linked and we're able to travel between the communities to take part in the carnivals up there. We have the carnival in Tsiigehtchic, and the Peel River Jamboree in Fort McPherson, the Mad Trapper Rendezvous in Aklavik, the Beluga Jamboree in Tuk and the Muskrat Jamboree in Inuvik. It's always a good opportunity for people to get together and meet old friends, compare their snowmobiles to see who's got the fastest one and race their dog teams. Every community has a talent show and the talent in the Beaufort-Delta is the best in the Northwest Territories. So they always have a great time doing that.

I think all these carnivals are not possible without the hard work of so many people behind the scenes. Every year they volunteer, the same people over and over. So I think they need to be commended for all the work that they do.

They also wouldn't be possible without the corporate citizens we have in our communities that contribute to these carnivals year after year. We have them right across the Northwest Territories. We have good corporate citizens in the Northwest Territories. Even with the slow economic times, they're still freely giving of their money every year. I think all these people need to be commended for the good work they do supporting these carnivals. I thank all the people that put these carnivals together, the volunteers and the ones that do it year after year.

I would encourage all the people in the Beaufort-Delta and all the people across the Northwest Territories to take advantage of these great times. I would encourage them to take advantage of them and I would also encourage them to be very safe when they're driving to and from these carnivals.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two Pages that have come from the small community of Jean Marie River. Miss Alisha Grossetete and Miss Kyla

Norwegian are in Grade 9. Thank you for your hard work this week.

Also to the chaperone, my cousin Ms. Yvonne Norwegian, who was here helping them throughout the week.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to recognize today in the gallery Lorraine Phaneuf, the executive director for the Status of Women Council; and Gail Cyr, special advisor to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

I'd also like to recognize Gaetan Caron, chair of the National Energy Board; Susan Bedouin, leader of paralegal service of the National Energy Board; and, of course, David Hamilton, member of the National Energy Board.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize our table officers today. I recognize Mr. Anthony "Tony" Whitford as the resident of Weledeh.

In the gallery, I believe, is Amanda Mallon, who was there earlier. She is a resident of Weledeh and city councillor.

Also there is Gail Cyr, who has been mentioned, a recent recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal. Also, if memory serves, also perhaps a past Wise Woman Award winner and most importantly, of course, a resident of Weledeh.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a Page who worked with us last week and has been working with us again this week: Brenda Joyce-Hotte. Thank you very much for all the work that you've done.

As well, I would like to recognize two members from the NWT Teachers' Association who are with us today: Mr. Dave Roebuck, the executive director; and Ms. Gayla Meredith, who is the communications officer with the NWTTA.

I cannot ignore two acquaintances who are sitting at the Clerk's Table. It's an honour to have you two gentlemen here today: Mr. David Hamilton and Mr. Tony Whitford. Welcome, everyone.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to recognize a constituent in the gallery: Lorraine Phaneuf.

I'd as well like to recognize on this occasion our very favourite table officer, albeit two, I should say, today; I should make sure that's correct. I'd like to recognize my mentor, of course, the honourable Anthony W.J. Whitford. I'd also like to do special recognition to Mr. David Hamilton. He's been a friend as well as a mentor of mine for so long I remember when he was taller than I was. I've known him that long.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank two Pages here from the area of Range Lake. We have Naoka Blondin and MacKinley Moore. Thank you for your assistance, guys.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Lorraine Phaneuf and Gail Cyr, whose names are very familiar and common when it comes to efficient, healthy and positive programs across the Northwest Territories and in the communities. I've heard these names ever since I've been in the workforce, and I'm very glad to have finally met both of them and have them both in the House today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Colleagues, I'd like to welcome again Ms. Danielle Bryan, a visiting student from the University of Toronto. This is her last day here with us, so all the best to you, Ms. Bryan.

I'd like to welcome all the visitors in the public gallery here today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings here today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Acknowledgements

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-17(2): CANADIAN RANGERS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 26, 2012, the Canadian Rangers welcomed its 59<sup>th</sup> patrol to the Northern Canada Group. Based on their website, the Canadian Rangers are the military eyes and ears in the North, hence their motivation. They're watchers. There are 163 patrols across Canada. Many are Aboriginal and speak a native language. I want to acknowledge those people who make this a reality in the Northwest Territories and those who encourage them.

The Canadian Rangers provide a vital service to our country. It is important their commitment and dedication is acknowledged by everyone.

Deline has 16 volunteer Canadian Rangers and are now part of a larger family of over 1,500 in the Northern Canada Patrol Group. Congratulations, Deline, for setting an example through hard work and being role models for others to follow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 105-17(2): TOBACCO TAX COLLECTION

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in my Member's statement I made reference to a potential open door in the tobacco tax collection process. Specifically, the manual self-reporting remains portion of the GNWT tax. As stated, I have highlighted a potential problem which fails to ensure we are indeed getting the maximum tax of what tobacco comes into the NWT for sale. In order to put accountability and public trust into the system as it stands today, would the Minister of Finance consider having a one-source of distribution for all tobacco coming into the Northwest Territories so that we can ensure that all cigarettes are accounted for and that all taxes are collected?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's internal Audit Bureau spent over 600 hours of man time to investigate the allegations that have been raised in regard to tobacco, and they reached the following conclusions, which I will quickly outline:

- that there was a reasonable assurance that the GNWT was collecting the required tobacco tax revenue;
- there was no evidence to support assertions that collectors were under-reporting their sales volume to the GNWT;
- there was no evidence that the Northwest Company was incorrectly reporting sales to the NWT to avoid paying the higher tax rate; and
- some small retailers were circumventing the NWT tobacco tax collection process by making purchases from an unlicensed wholesaler in Alberta.

Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I appreciate the summation, as I know I heard from the Minister before. But going back to the suggestion of a single distribution wholesaler in the NWT to mitigate this manual self-reporting structure as we see today, I think it's a

wise move on behalf of the GNWT and I think it's also a smart business decision. I guess the question is: What's holding the Minister back from considering a solution so we can put accountability and public trust back into the system?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We've spent a lot of time looking at this issue. There are a number of questions and areas, of course, for further discussion. Is the issue on the wholesale side and setting up a single wholesaler, or is it on the retail side, which is where I believe the problem is, and the issue of while we can have a good system like most laws in the country, which is why we have jails and police. If people want to try to circumvent the system, as they do with tobacco, there are many ways to try to do that. Our job, as the Member has indicated, is to try to make sure that we have as airtight a system as possible. I would, of course, look forward to continued discussions on this issue with the Member and committee, as we move through business planning processes, as a way to keep this issue under the magnifying glass for a thorough discussion. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I do appreciate the Minister for his summation again here, but I don't believe the Minister today is clearly seeing the potential for this exploitation, this manual remittance portion. It's clear that there is a viable solution out there with a single-source distribution of a wholesaler and it appears that it's just not in his language. At least it's not in a language that I think will address the issue. I have highlighted a potential problem in our tax collection process, and in doing so, if the Minister isn't going down this pathway, what measures will he put forward so that we can put accountability back into the system?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I could repeat the findings of the internal Audit Bureau, which has given me comfort that the system overall is working. Are there improvements? Absolutely. I'm sure if we had more resources and more ability, we could have more folks on the ground.

The issue of the one wholesaler, that's one potential way to look at things. Will it deal with the issue of retailers? I'm not convinced that it will. Am I prepared to have more discussion? I am.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister for leaning towards the direction of a single-source distribution centre, but to go further now, I believe that the issue being raised today puts some doubt in the way we're doing our tobacco tax. In doing so, I'm asking the Minister: Could we have a whole disclosure to the House with the internal Audit Bureau so that we can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that we are indeed 100 percent confident that we're collecting

this tobacco tax, and would the Minister agree to reporting these findings to this House? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The assertion initially was that we were missing up to \$12 million to \$15 million a year in lost tax revenue because of unreported tobacco sales. We put a significant amount of manpower onto that issue to follow up on that matter. As Finance Minister, the thought of us missing that kind of revenue, given our fiscal circumstances, immediately got my eye. We spent months doing the work. We've come back. The first finding is that there's a reasonable assurance that the GNWT was collecting the required tobacco tax revenue.

The Member has some ongoing concerns. I'm prepared to look at and discuss those further. He's made a suggestion. I don't believe there's a silver bullet that will provide the type of certainty that the Member asks for, and in the businesses that we're in, I don't think we could point to any that provides 100 percent certainty in anything we do. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### QUESTION 106-17(2): EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I raised, once again, the emergency protection order issue. This does cause grave concern, as far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the falsely accused, and the justice by itself, by nature, seems to be ignoring them as now becoming a victim. My question for the Minister of Justice is: Does the Minister of Justice believe at this particular time the policies and procedures put in place to issue an emergency protection order are fair and balanced? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The emergency protection order is an incredibly valuable tool to battle family violence in the Northwest Territories. I've had an opportunity to talk with RCMP, NGOs and the department about the importance of these EPOs, and I've had an opportunity to look at the policies that exist and talk about those policies with the department and others. I believe that there are some recommendations that came forward in the report that was done in the last Assembly. We are looking at those recommendations and we will make corrections and improvements where appropriate. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'm glad the Minister referenced the report, because if he had a chance to read it – not to say he didn't – but if he did read it, he'd also note that on page 28 of the report it talks about why

RCMP like EPOs. They're a good tool because they don't require any investigation to issue an EPO. Forty percent of the officers suggested that. But at the same time RCMP have also noted and they feel that further information to confirm the victim's accusation to ensure that the applicant's legitimates are applied on good grounds. Pointing at those two variances noted in this particular report, I'd like to ask the Minister again: Are the policies and procedures designed in a way to provide fairness for the accused person for whom an EPO needs to be issued? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The Member has quoted from the report. The report is under consideration and we will make improvements to the EPO process as we move forward. The EPOs are supported by a significant number of different groups in the Northwest Territories and they have saved lives. I had an opportunity to talk with the RCMP in Inuvik when we were up there in January, and they said very clearly that EPOs save lives. At the end of the day, that's an incredibly important thing. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I've never said, to the contrary, what the Minister just stated. So I want to make sure that that's ultimately crystal clear, that I too do believe that EPOs will save lives and are an important mechanism in our justice system. But the way the report was written, it went further on to discredit the RCMP's position by almost suggesting – I'm being clear here – that they may be biased on their pursuit. On one hand we talk about issuance of why; because we need safety and protection. On the other hand, we have a credible force or agency in our system that says there are problems and we need to investigate them, and then they discredit them. We have a bit of a challenge here. So what is the Minister of Justice going to do to ensure and issue an edict to ensure that there is fairness and relief for people who have been falsely accused? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The act is designed in such a way, and EPOs are designed in such a way, that there are checks and balances. When an individual comes in to file or prepare an EPO, they sit down with people who have been trained on what an EPO is and how it's supposed to be filled out. Those individuals, through the training – and I have confirmed this with the department – are required to explain to the individual the ramifications of lies, which the act does cover as well. The act says if you lie and you're charged, you can receive jail time or fines. There are checks and balances in place, and at the end of the day, the act didn't create the victims, it's the person who provided false information or lied, and those individuals can be charged under the Criminal Code as well.

The system is designed to encourage people not to lie, but we can't stop people from lying. There will always be people who abuse systems. In this case, the case that happened earlier, that did in fact happen, and the person was charged and convicted.

But the program is important. It provides value. It needs to continue and we support it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the little leeway you have given me on this particular problem, because it is a big problem. The justice system, the Supreme Court has noted about the potential for people using EPOs is a tool for custody battles and divorces. The last thing I will point out is the report is built around three things: increasing awareness, improve access to emergency protection and to improve protection. Nowhere in this report does it support findings that are crystal clear that say that EPOs can be abused. There is not one recommendation to say we need to make sure it is fair. What is the Minister going to look at when it cites these and then discredits them? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, the report is before us and it is being reviewed by the department. I had directed the department to review the training programs that they have in place, that people who assist people prepare EPOs go through to ensure that they make it very clear to individuals the ramifications of perjury. We need to make sure that people understand the ramifications of using a tool like this to hurt as opposed to help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### QUESTION 107-17(2):

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of New Energy Initiatives, Mr. Bob McLeod. As mentioned in my Member's statement earlier today, fossil fuels are failing us in both supply and price, and the trends indicate that those are only going to get worse more rapidly. In contrast, jurisdictions are switching to renewable energy and proving the naysayers wrong in every case, surpassing targets big time. Will the GNWT take steps to inform themselves of this trend and implement such policies here? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels is a priority of this government. We have taken initial steps in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly where we invested approximately \$60 million over the lifetime of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to

that very end that the Member has raised. We are following all of the developments. We have looked at what Ontario has done. We looked at other jurisdictions. It is our intention to do so. Of course, our main concern is to make sure that we continue to provide energy and that we do it at reasonable rates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. I wish it was completely accurate, but unfortunately many of those \$60 million, of course, were directed to irrational subsidies of fossil fuels. Many of our people across the Northwest Territories want to reduce their energy costs. They have motivation and infrastructure suitable for generating renewable energy for their own use and for sale, but first a fair price is needed. A feed-in tariff price is fair because it recognizes the benefits and savings of renewable energy. Will the Minister commit to considering a feed-in tariff policy and requiring all NWT power companies to purchase renewable energy at a fair feed-in tariff price? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Member suggests that we are irrational, especially since all of those expenditures were approved by this House. Nevertheless, we spent a significant amount of money to look at solar, geothermal, biomass, all of those alternatives, and we have, through the Public Utilities Board, worked with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to establish a process for net metering. We are quite prepared to go down that road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do indeed appreciate the investigation of that metering by the Power Corporation. Unfortunately, it has set a purchase price at a ridiculously low price and will go nowhere until we establish a feed-in tariff price. I appreciate the Minister's commitment there to investigate this feed-in tariff and put one in place.

The smart grid and time of day pricing have proven to reduce costs and usually increase efficiency of energy systems. An example of that is putting down, taking off the peak power requirement that reduces energy efficiency in our systems to about 20 or 25 percent; very inefficient. Will the Minister commit to learning about this tool and promoting its application in the Northwest Territories, the smart grid? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The smart grid as described sounds very exciting. This is something that we would very much want to investigate and explore. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's commitment once again. We need to move from an outdated energy system

that is costing our people in every way, to one that promotes healthy land, people and economies. What steps will the Minister take to get all of this done during our term? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we intend to continue to build on work that was started in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, where we undertook a number of pilot projects and a number of new initiatives. As part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, we will continue to work. We will be looking to identify resources through the business planning process. We will want to continue to increase our use of alternative and renewable sources of energy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 108-17(2):  
EFFECT ON ELDERS OF  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENT SCALE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I received several phone calls last night. I want to ask the Minister of Housing on the announcement of including elders on this rent scale. How many elders would be affected on this new announcement to have them start paying rent by July 1<sup>st</sup>?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have approximately just over 700 seniors right now that are currently paying zero. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, how many of these 700 seniors are in the Sahtu that there is going to be an impact by this announcement?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have the numbers broken down as per region. However, I can gather that information and share it with the Member. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, first initial reaction for some of the constituents of mine were saying, what is happening? What is going on? Why are they charging rent now or planning to charge seniors this rent scale? What is the thinking behind these changes to the rent scale for the elders who are going to be paying rent if it all goes through on July 1<sup>st</sup>?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, this has been a discussion that has been going on for a number of years. Seniors have been very fortunate in the past where they have had to pay no rent. It is still costing the Housing Corporation an average \$16,000 to \$24,000 a year to maintain these units. The thinking behind it is during the engagement process there were a lot of seniors that had

expressed a willingness and they don't mind paying their fair share. There are some that were reluctant to phone for maintenance services because they don't pay any rent. Some of this was brought on by the seniors themselves. The fact is that, with everything going on and declining funding and everything, it is just not sustainable anymore to be doing this. Our population is aging. We are looking at probably double or triple the amount of seniors by the time the federal funding expires. It is something that is just not sustainable anymore for the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly what I have heard from the Sahtu elders certainly didn't relay that message to me. Really it was the younger people who were working that want to make sure the rent scale was adjusted. Our elders in the Sahtu certainly didn't convey that to me, and I don't think that's an accurate picture that the Minister is saying, that some of the seniors want to pay their rent. So, Mr. Speaker, I know the government may not agree with me, but I cannot sit here and agree with this principle of charging the elders rent coming in July. It's just unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what to do about it, but why should I sit here and pretend that it's okay to start charging or plan to charge our elders rent in my region when the cost of living is so high?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you. I can understand the Member. He's listening, obviously, to his constituents, and we didn't expect this to be a very popular move, but it's one that we felt needed to be made. There will be some adjustments.

Looking at the overall rent scale review, I think there's been a lot of positive changes in there that are going to effect a lot of people across the Northwest Territories. So when we undertook this exercise, we looked at all aspects of how we deliver housing and we tried to improve on them. We're in a situation where we need to make best use of our money for investments, and we've also added an exemption in there for seniors. So their money that can be assessed is a lot higher than the regular tenants. So we have made some conditions for seniors, so a lot of those seniors living on fixed incomes will be paying the minimum, not based on what they actually make. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 109-17(2):  
RECONSTRUCTION OF HIGHWAY NO. 7

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week I made great efforts to represent Fort Liard, the Nahendeh constituents, with Highway No. 7. I would like to continue and

ask the Minister of Transportation about Highway No. 7 once again.

The Conference Board of Canada recently released an article on closing the transportation infrastructure gaps in Canada, and they made note of highlighting Highway No. 7 that's been closed every year for the last three years for at least two weeks, indicating that it interrupts mail, grocery supplies, as well as disrupting emergency medical services.

I'd like to ask the Minister, I know that last week in Committee of the Whole I made great strides to get commitments to work on the road this spring. However, the second part of my initiative was to get the Minister to raise the issue in Ottawa and also to make it a priority of our government. So when is the next opportunity that he will be meeting with his federal counterparts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The condition of Highway No. 7 is important to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the folks who live in Nahendeh and the Deh Cho region. We certainly will be trying to set up a meeting with my counterpart, Minister Lebel. I will be in Ottawa from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>, and I'm hoping to have the opportunity to sit down with Minister Lebel at that time. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. It's clear that our territorial government knows that they need to rebuild the road, but it's got limited resources, as well as it's clear, also, that Cabinet must address the northern transportation infrastructure and the financial gap that we have. Also, I'd like if the Minister would raise it with the federal Minister and also indicate that because of our low population density, it's not a reason to defer projects and expenditures in our riding.

So I would like to ask the Minister what type of strategy, how he will raise the issue with the federal Minister. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** If we are going to grow our resources and our economy here in the Northwest Territories, an integral part of that is having a transportation system and infrastructure built here in the territory that is going to support the growth of our economy and lead us in that direction. We've been stressing this point to the federal government for a number of years and will continue to stress the importance of our transportation infrastructure to the federal government any chance we get. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'd like to ask the Minister what strategy he is developing, in that previous administrations have created documents, such as Connecting Canada and other documents. I'd like to know what the Minister's strategy is when he's

meeting with the federal government, because the development of our northern roads, particularly Highway No. 7, is critical to the economic development of my region and the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We are in the process of putting together another plan that will just lead again to stressing the importance of our transportation infrastructure here in the Northwest Territories and how we can avail ourselves of some substantial capital dollars to carry out the work that is required there. So I think the Member can look forward to us continuing to pursue that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, the Prime Minister's office is also aware of Highway No. 7. I had a resident of Fort Simpson advocating with the Prime Minister of Canada as well. So I'd like to ask our Minister and our government to do the same, to make it a highlight of the federal government and to press it in that light and give us at least one line in the federal budget with Highway No. 7. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Again, I appreciate the Member's passion for Highway No. 7 and the need to get those capital dollars that are required for the reconstruction of that highway. I will continue to work with the Member to see that that happens. Again, we are going to have to pursue capital dollars wherever we can find them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 110-17(2):  
LIFEJACKET PROGRAM TO  
PROMOTE WATER SAFETY

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Transportation in regard to his Minister's statement that he made earlier today. It just goes to show that prevention, promotion and education works, and that he's doing a great job with the Department of Transportation. It's something that all departments should look into doing, to cut down on the costs in the Northwest Territories.

With the programs that he mentioned, we have a lot of communities up and down the Mackenzie River and I just wanted to ask the Minister of Transportation, has he or his department done any work on doing a lifejacket borrowing program between the communities that sit on the Mackenzie River, seeing as a lot of people do travel that river as a mode of transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a great idea and that's how ideas are born. I think we need to be looking to Regular Members to supply us with ideas on how we can enhance public education and awareness when it comes to safety on the water, on our roads, on our trails. Certainly as we move forward, we'll be looking for partners to help us deliver that safety message. I appreciate the Member's comments.

**MR. MOSES:** We're in the middle of February here and we're getting ready for our summer breakup and the ice melting away. That's a lot of time, plenty of time from now until people get onto the waterways. It's a good opportunity, as well, for the department to start looking into a possible program like a lifejacket borrowing program, like I said, in all the communities that do sit on waterways. Would the Minister commit to look at such a program and putting funds away so that we can ensure that our residents who travel the Mackenzie River, that our modes of transportation are safe? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We've got a number of initiatives that we're looking at for next year, and certainly incorporating something like a lifejacket borrowing system is something that I believe we can look at. I do appreciate the Member bringing that issue up today.

**MR. MOSES:** Further to that I just wanted to ask the Minister of Transportation if he's done any work with our five sport and rec organizations in the NWT who do provide kayak programs, canoe programs, skiing, on-the-land programs that do transportation. Has the Department of Transportation done any work with these sport and rec organizations to provide safety to people who enjoy going out on the land?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I know we do work with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of ECE, and to the specifics of whether we're working with the rec associations around the Northwest Territories, again, I think if we're going to have continued success in delivering safety, it is important that we work with partners around the Northwest Territories. I again will commit to getting back to the Member on how we have interacted with those organizations.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do want to continue to see these encouraging results going into the next fiscal year and beyond. Just in regard to the zero driving and boating fatalities, I'd like to ask the Minister how the new proposed legislation on hand-held devices with driving has been going and have there been any infractions on that.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I think the legislation as it pertains to distracted driving is another tool that

keeps our roads safe. There have been a number of tickets issued for folks driving with cell phones and things like that. We're encouraged that people are putting their phones away when they're driving. I know me personally, before the new legislation came in, I was guilty of using my cell phone, but now that the new legislation is in place, I, too, leave the phone alone when I'm driving and I encourage anybody else out there to do the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 111-17(2):  
TEACHER RECRUITMENT

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage the Minister of Transportation to take the pledge to leave the phone alone and post a sticker on his window.

My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and I would like to say that we heard a great deal about bullying yesterday and I think we heard also about the impact that teachers can have on their students. It was an excellent discussion, as I mentioned. One of the things that we struggle with is to get and keep teachers in the Territories and in our communities, particularly in our small and isolated communities. One of the hindrances and one of the difficulties that we have is that we don't have adequate housing for our teachers in our small communities. Recognizing this problem – and I do believe the Minister recognizes the problem – I would like him to advise us at this point, because we've had things on and off for awhile, but at this point what is the Department of Education and what is the GNWT in general doing to try and solve this issue of housing capacity for teachers in our communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We were fortunate enough for 2011-2012 for those individuals - the teachers coming to the North and also from the North - finding a suitable accommodation. It is a challenge. It's a struggle at times for those teachers to find accommodations in the communities, especially isolated communities. This is an area that we've been working on in a coordinated approach with the Housing Corporation, my department, and also Health, because we have to deal with other professions as well. There is a review on the way, as Mr. McLeod alluded to, of the Shelter Policy review. This is an area that has been targeted as well.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. I know a number of years ago there was a defined program between the Housing

Corporation and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to try and encourage communities to take the responsibility and for the community to provide some housing for teachers and professionals in general, I guess. My understanding is that program didn't work very well. I'd like to know from the Minister of Education if there's a particular explanation as to why that program hasn't been all that successful.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** There has been some uptake on the application process. As the Member stated, it hasn't been very successful to date. We are exploring those areas. We explored that area as an option and we are also exploring other areas where the Shelter Policy review would capture some of the discussions we've had in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Now we're into the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, how to deal with the housing shortage in the communities, especially for staff or professions that we need to take care of.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister again. One of the other hindrances for getting and keeping teachers in our communities is their feeling that they're not safe within the schools or within the community. I know that a number of years ago... Sorry. I should back up. Some of the boards and district education authorities do have a policy, a Safe Schools Policy, but we don't have one across the GNWT. I believe in 2009 there was a memorandum of understanding between the teachers' union and the GNWT to develop a Safe Schools Policy. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not that goal has been accomplished, has that memorandum been finalized, and is there a Safe Schools Policy all the way across the NWT that all schools should abide by.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I totally agree with the Member that we need to safeguard our teachers and professions in the school. I know there are some policies in place at the regional and community schools about zero tolerance on staff abuse. The Safe School Policy, I need to look into the status on that, if it's been completed, if it is a Northwest Territories-wide initiative. I'll get that information and the recent update and provide that to the Members.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I really appreciate that commitment. I know, from my understanding, there's been no response received by either the NWTTA or anybody else. I guess I would like to know from the Minister... I appreciate he's going to look into this. Any idea when I can expect his response?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Once we leave here I'll gather the information from my department and the parties that are involved, the regional groups. Hopefully within a week or two from now, if we can

get our hands on the Safe School Policy, if it's in place, then I'll provide that to the Members.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 112-17(2):  
APPEALS TRIBUNAL DECISIONS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be directed to the Minister of WSCC. It's been brought to my attention that the Appeals Tribunal rulings or decisions have not been placed in a public manner like normal court decisions. My question to the Minister of WSCC is: Why aren't decisions of the Appeals Tribunal publicized?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Mr. Jackson Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I need to follow up with the Member's statement. I'll definitely follow through with my department where things are at within the WSCC about the tribunal. I'll definitely follow up.

**MR. HAWKINS:** My next question for the Minister of WSCC is: On that particular case, can you explain why if landlord/tenant issues are publicized when they go before the rental office, why family law matters are publicized, why child protection rulings are modified but still publicized and, finally, why human rights cases and law society discipline rulings publicized, why wouldn't we publicize decisions of the NWT Appeals Tribunal through the WSCC in the context of fairness?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** About the publication, again I need to follow up with WSCC. They are arm's length from our government and they have their own board of governance. There is also a tribunal board that we deal with as well. I need to find out the status of where things are at with the Member's statement.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Under the context of public confidence, it can only be determined when people understand that justice has fairly been applied, to understand like decisions are applied in a similar manner with like decisions that demonstrates fairness. It also demonstrates scrutiny from the public that they know that the system is working. Is there any particular decision why the Minister would not support publication of these Appeals Tribunal decisions?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** As much as it hurts, I have to take this as notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 113-17(2):  
EFFECTS ON ELDERS OF  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENT SCALE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've talked to the Minister of the Housing Corporation on the plans to charge rent to the elders, and the Minister gave me a significant number of 700 seniors that are going to be impacted and some of the seniors that said it's okay. I have a hard time believing that of elders in my region. I don't think it's going to be okay. I don't know where the Minister is getting the okay from the seniors. I want to ask the Minister responsible for Seniors how he is working with this government here to be responsible for seniors that the government is now planning to charge rent to the elders and how he is protecting the seniors that are low income, don't have much money, even though the Minister has indicated that there's an exemption. It's pretty difficult for some of our elders who are living in poverty to now look at this rent payment beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Tom Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have a meeting set up with the NWT Seniors' Society on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Previously when this discussion had come up at the Seniors' Society, in different capacities that I served as I met with the Seniors' Society, they had indicated that they did not have an issue with seniors rent through that society. I have not been involved in any form of consultation with the seniors that are in public housing.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** We have one representative on the Seniors' Society and that representative doesn't have any funds to go around to the five Sahtu communities and talk to all the seniors in their own language who are living in public housing units. Can the Minister responsible for Seniors look at coming in and having a meeting with the Sahtu elders and say, is this what you want? Is this what you agreed to? Come and hear the people who are struggling and who are poor and say, is this what you want? If not, we need to do it now.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I certainly have no issue with contacting the various seniors organizations at the community levels not only in the Sahtu but right across the territory. I had not thought about this discussion particularly previous to today, but I do have no problem whatsoever discussing the issue with them. I don't know if I'll be able to actually have any face-to-face meetings with the seniors.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Maybe I could help on my end. I can certainly visit the people in the Sahtu and go see the elders who are living in the public housing units. The same with any MLA here when they head back to their ridings. Talk to the elders and ask, is this what you want your government to do,

start charging you rent come July 1<sup>st</sup>? Sit down and talk with them. Hopefully then we can get back to the Minister responsible for Seniors, who will work with your colleagues and say is this what we want to do as a government. I ask the Minister if he would be willing to be open to our feedback once we have our constituent tours with our elders in the communities

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I welcome feedback from the NWT seniors. I have met with them in the past in this capacity and intend to meet with them next month in this capacity again. At that time my thought is that I think the seniors would meet with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to discuss this issue. I'm also prepared to discuss that issue as the Minister who represents the seniors. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the elders in the Sahtu region cannot afford this. Yesterday when I talked to one of the constituents, they said, what? What is this government thinking about? There are some seniors maybe in larger centres that could afford to pay a little bit of rent, but not in the Sahtu and maybe no other communities. They have a hard time and pretty soon they're going to maybe get eviction notices if we continue down this path. I ask the Minister responsible for all seniors and elders, can he help us work with his Cabinet colleagues to look at what can we do to help the government with the fiscal financial restraints that we have within the Housing Corporation and help our elders in our small communities who are poor.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I'm prepared to represent the seniors and have a discussion with the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation on this issue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 114-17(2):  
ABORIGINAL SKILLS EMPLOYMENT  
PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on a different topic this time around.

A year ago this House recognized that the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnerships Program was going to expire, and it is set to expire on March 31<sup>st</sup> of this particular year. We had a motion in the House. I know a number of Members, including myself, wrote to the federal Minister, requesting that the program be redefined and re-implemented. I believe the Minister followed up with the federal Minister of the day. I'd like to know

whether or not he has received any information from the federal Minister on whether or not this program is going to be continued under another name. Can he advise the House where things are at in regard to this issue? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular area has been successful in the Northwest Territories. The former ASEP has been producing a world-class, skilled workforce in the Northwest Territories and transferrable skills onto other provincial jurisdictions as well. We want to continue with the process, as well, since it's been very successful.

I did meet with my federal counterpart in Ottawa when I was there in December, and we talked about this specific topic, the Mine Training Society, where it's going and that March 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline, sunsetting. Leona Aglukkaq, at that time, spoke about a pan-territorial initiative: Nunavut, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories combined. Those are the types of discussions that we are having. It's looking very positive, as we move forward, that this particular piece of work will continue, and we will continue to push from our end, as the GNWT, goals and objectives with the federal government.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that update. I'm a little concerned in that what he's saying is not quite the concrete support from the federal government that I was hoping for. I know I received a letter back from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada which indicated to me that the government would continue to support skills development through what she says is a new skills and partnership fund. I wonder if the Minister could comment on that fund. Does he have any details on that new program and is it, in fact, a definite program that's going ahead?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** There is a program in place with the federal government and it's to replace ASEP. Now the acronym is ASET. It's a program that individual Aboriginal organizations can access funding for, for training. It's a bit different from what the Mine Training Society has done for a number of years. We've argued that with the federal Minister Diane Finley, but they've already had their mind set on this ASET program. We'll continue to discuss our initiative pan-territorially. It's been very successful, Mr. Speaker. The Mine Training Society has been leading the way through industries when it comes to producing a talented, skilled workforce. We'll continue to push that with the federal government

Again, it looks very positive. I'm currently working with my colleague, ITI, on this particular initiative. Our Premier has been voicing the same issue with

federal counterparts and the Prime Minister as well. It's on the radar with the feds.

**MS. BISARO:** I am really pleased to hear that our government, the Minister and other Ministers, are pushing this particular initiative. I agree with the Minister; it has been an extremely successful program.

I am a little bit concerned, though, if the federal government is putting a program in place that's a little bit different. I know that the Mine Training Society is one group that has used a great deal of this funding for very successful results. There are several other organizations as well. So my concern and my question to the Minister is whether or not there is going to be any impact at the end of March as we cross over from one program to the next. Is it going to have an impact on the Mine Training Society and other organizations using ASEP funding? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** For the interim, the three mining industries have agreed to contribute to the Mine Training Society. There's a feasibility study that's on the way. We, as Education, Culture and Employment, have always supported it and we will continue to support the transition period. We want to see no or a minimal impact on the Mine Training Society as we move beyond March 31, 2012. That is our goal. We will push that, again, with the federal government. With the three mining companies on board, they are adamant that we need to keep pushing for the skilled workforce that they'll need for upcoming employment opportunities. So we will continue to work with those industries. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate the work the Minister is doing. He recognizes the importance, as do Members, of the ASEP program. So, will the Minister continue to fight, basically, for what we need for our Mine Training Society here in the NWT? Will he continue to do that with the federal Minister? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Most definitely. That is our goal and objective. We want this Mine Training Society to survive the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. It's going to happen. We have industries lined up already. We have the federal government that is agreeing to initiatives and we need to continue with this ship that we built. We need to continue to advocate with the federal government. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 115-17(2):  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. I'd like to keep the Minister of ECE busy today and I wish we were on solar power right now.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Minister, I know there has been an Early Childhood Development Program review going on. It's partly related, of course, to the Aboriginal Student Initiative review, which was completed and is, I think, being implemented now. Could we get an update from the Minister on the Early Childhood Development from the Minister of ECE? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Early Childhood Development framework has been a key in our discussions at the forum with Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. It's on our radar within the ECE department. We are going through the final stages of the recommendations. The changes are forthcoming and we're finalizing that within our Education department. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate those remarks. Good to hear. I see early childhood development as the answer; one of the big answers to many of our issues in the health, education and the justice field, a huge opportunity. So we need to get these things in place. Ninety percent of what we know of the brain today has been learned in the last decade. We need to incorporate that. There are amazing relationships being discovered, and opportunities for savings and treating our people better. So will the Minister tell us when we will be getting this information and can we expect to see it in the business plans for the remainder of 2012-13?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The Member is correct about the high importance of this particular subject. Early childhood has been in the forefront in discussions at the regional forums. At all forums I have attended, that has been at the forefront of the discussion. We need to focus on the unborn child. The children are one year old or six months old. We need to start from there. So with this particular piece of work before us, as I stated, it's been finalized within my department. The plan is to initiate that through our business planning process, the discussions we are going to be having with the standing committee, I'm hoping we will have before the 2012-2013 business planning cycle. If not, it will be at a later time, but that is part of our goals and objectives to do that, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

## QUESTION 116-17(2):

## H. PYLORI TESTING IN THE SAHTU

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a question to the Minister of Health and Social Services on the cancer causing bacteria H. pylori and if there are any types of discussions that they are going to do some work in the Sahtu region. I know Aklavik has done this work and now I want to know if some of this work is going to be done in the Sahtu.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if this particular type of virus is going to be investigated, but the Health department will be working with the Canadian Institute of Health Research, to do some research work in Fort Good Hope to look at some cancer screening and some things like water, diet and other things that may be impacting on the rates of cancer in the Sahtu. So we will be working in a couple of communities, one of them being Fort Good Hope, looking at doing some research looking at what may be causing the high rates of cancer. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** That's good news from the department to look at the Sahtu. I raised this because, again, I said last night that I spoke to one of my constituents in Tulita who is being treated for H. pylori. I want to see if the investigation will be looked at in all five of the Sahtu communities of this cancer-causing bacteria. I'm happy to hear that Fort Good Hope will be looked at as a starting point. We need to look at all the communities in the Sahtu. Will the Minister look at that?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I know the department has worked with a group in the past to do this very specific testing in Aklavik. I will go back to the department to see what it takes in order to do these tests in other communities, and if it's not an issue that... If it's something we can do right away, we can get to it. But I don't know the amount of work it would take, so I would like to go back to the department to have that discussion before I can make a commitment on the floor that we're going to be able to do these tests in all the communities in Sahtu. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Some years ago they did a successful screening test in Aklavik. If it takes supplementary funding to get this going, this test will save lives in the Sahtu. Like I said, I heard somebody in Tulita is being treated for this specific cancer-causing bacteria right now. If it takes some money, then let's get it done and let's start saving some lives. Will the Minister vigorously investigate in the Sahtu, come back with some numbers and say, yes, we have some in Tulita, Deline or Good Hope or the Wells or Colville and this needs to be

looked at? This is a sleeping giant that needs to be looked after. Would the Minister do that?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The health concerns of all citizens in the Northwest Territories, including the citizens of Sahtu, are of importance to the Department of Health and Social Services. So if we are able to do it without going for a supp at this time, I am able to commit to looking at that. If it is more elaborate than that and there has to be a supplementary appropriation requirement before we can do this, then I would have to discuss that with other Cabinet members and the House before we can proceed with that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that between now and whenever there is action taken, maybe all the whole Northwest Territories needs to be looked at. I'm asking right now for the Sahtu communities. Between now and then, what can this department do to advise people in the five Sahtu communities about this cancer-causing bacteria? What things should they look out for? What things should they be seeing a nurse for and asking for? This constituent of mine is being treated as we speak today for this specific bacteria. What do other people need to be aware of in their own Dene language to say yes, I need to get checked out because this is dangerous? What can the Minister advise us in the House that he can do between now and when we get the real action done on the screening?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The department can communicate with the health and social services authority in Norman Wells, and in turn, the health and social services authority can advise people in the community. I think the department and nurses are aware of what the symptoms would be for the H. pylori, so they could have the people come and communicate with people to see if individuals could come into the health centre to be tested. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills.

Colleagues, we are going to take a 15-minute break here, and we will continue in 15 minutes. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5.

---Unanimous consent granted

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. It gives me great pleasure to recognize the leadership of Deline: elder Andrew John Kenny and I see also up there self-negotiator and a good man all around, Danny Gaudet from Deline. Steven Taniton was also there and Leonard Kenny; they had to do some other errands. Hello to Chief Tutcho and Peter Menacho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I indicated earlier Ms. Yvonne Norwegian was a chaperone from Jean Marie, and she's in the gallery. I'd like to welcome her to the proceedings of the House. Good to see you here.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 22-17(2):  
A LEGACY FOR THE NORTH: NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2008-2009

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "A Legacy for the North: Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Annual Report, 2008-2009."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Industry Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

TABLED DOCUMENT 23-17(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
MARKETING PLAN  
2012-2013

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Northwest Territories Marketing Plan, 2012-2013." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd like to ask all our visitors if you have a cell, please turn the ringers off. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-17(2):  
INTERACTIVITY TRANSFERS  
EXCEEDING \$250,000 FOR THE PERIOD  
APRIL 1, 2011, TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Section 32.1(1) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the following document, titled "List of Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2011, to December 31, 2011." Thank you.

TABLED DOCUMENT 25-17(2):  
OFFICE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2010-2011

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Colleagues, pursuant to Section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I wish to table the Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner Annual Report, 2010-2011.

Ms. Sarah Jerome, Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, planned to be in the gallery today for the tabling of her document. Due to flight cancellations, Ms. Jerome can't be here today and I'd like to send her regrets to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Menicoche.

### Motions

MOTION 2-17(2):  
OLD AGE SECURITY,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS seniors are valued and respected members of our communities who have contributed throughout their lives and deserve our support;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced its intent to reform the Old Age Security system;

AND WHEREAS reductions to Old Age Security benefits and/or increasing the age of eligibility would negatively impact future NWT seniors;

AND WHEREAS poverty, the lack of jobs and employer-sponsored pensions, and low incomes already impact many seniors in the Northwest Territories, creating the need for the GNWT's current Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit Program;

AND WHEREAS reductions to Old Age Security would put pressure on the GNWT to replace those benefits, putting additional strain on our government's ability to deliver social programs;

AND WHEREAS research by the Parliamentary Budget Office shows that the current Old Age Security system is affordable and sustainable over the long term;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly opposes any reductions to Canada's Old Age Security benefits;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Premier of the Northwest Territories champion this issue to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to ensure that Old Age Security benefits are not reduced for current or future NWT seniors;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are allowed to speak to this motion. I don't think the intent was to have the motion speeded up in the House today, because of the seriousness of the issue that is before not only the NWT but all residents of Canada.

I know that the federal government had intended to change our Old Age Security system. Canadians want decent pensions, not more years of working. I know that the federal government said that it made plans for this budget, but they had indicated that now the changes will be in future years to come.

With that, I think our GNWT has to get on the right side of this issue. We have to be proactive. Our own government should be lobbying on behalf of the NWT seniors and advocating that changes to the Old Age Security system is not something that we need or want.

It is very serious in Canada. The budget is coming out. Hopefully there is nothing there, but I think that we have to be more proactive, like I said, and get out there to Ottawa and lobby. We are asking for our Premier to start those initiatives, working with the Minister of Health and Social Services and our Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to thank Member Menicoche for bringing forward this particular motion. He is quite right in the context of being concerned about our seniors. Of course, this motion speaks to the fact that we want to support and protect the seniors in future years to make sure that the Old Age Security benefit is there for them.

Mr. Speaker, doing a bit of research, I pulled up information that the parliamentary budget officer

has done. He did a study called the Federal Fiscal Sustainability of Elderly Benefits. What he has noted here, in short, without quoting it at length, is the fact that he notes that, yes, it will increase in costs in the next few years, but it has a steep decline. He also points out that it is a sustainable benefit and the fact that changes don't necessarily need to be made. He does highlight a few areas, most particular where he talks about, he says elderly benefits are financed from the Government of Canada's general revenues. He points out that elderly benefits program should be assessed in a broader framework of fiscal sustainability, which requires the government debt cannot ultimately grow faster than the economy. He wants to tie these two particular things together to point this out. I think it is a very good, valid observation.

The elderly in our community and in the North as well as, of course, across Canada, have done so much for bringing this to where we are today. I think that this motion here reaffirms our commitment and support to our seniors community as well as our future community.

I will leave with this, which is the fact that if all goes well, every one of us will be a senior one day, if we are not there already. It is important that we always, again, stand committed and behind those who tread the path before us. I will support this motion.

Once again, I thank the Member for Nahendeh for bringing this initiative forward so we can empower our Premier to send a northern voice and a northern perspective to Ottawa to ensure that our views are heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank Member Menicoche for bringing this motion forward and Mr. Hawkins for seconding it.

I can't believe that in this day and age we are creating a lot of fear-mongering. Why are we waging a war against our seniors and our elders? It is disheartening. We are not sure where the federal Minister or Finance is going with this, why the perceived crisis. One has to ask: Is there another agenda out there for the public pension system? We don't know. Again, if you are going to look at savings of any plan, you have to look at the revenue on it. You have to look at program spending. That is for true sustainability and some management has prevailed. I am not sure if the federal system is looking at those areas. Raising the age of benefits is not one of those solutions.

People are living longer, Mr. Speaker. We know that from our statistics. This country of ours has survived a large economic crisis. I commend them for that, but if you look at the bigger picture, security benefits for seniors here is just a small piece of the overall economic situation to focus this attention on

raising the age. It doesn't make sense on the math. As Canadians and Northerners, we have other dire economic cobblestones on our pathway we should be focusing on, as I said earlier, sustainability, sound management and not raising this benefit. I will be speaking in favour of this motion for our government to be stewards for Northerners, seniors and our elders. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the intent and concern voiced and articulated in the motion. However, we also want to be very clear to the people we represent, that there is nothing imminent here, that we know of, for Old Age Security. It is good to be proactive, but any changes contemplated could be as much as 20 or 25 years down the road. It behooves us all to look at how we are doing, managing for retirement, but we want to reassure the elders today that they can go to bed and wake up knowing that they are not under any imminent threat, that this will be some time coming. We want to be clear about how we manage ourselves. We want to protect the benefits to seniors, but we definitely want to be measured and careful not to cause concern to the people, the elders today that are here and that are going to be with us over the coming years. I thank the Member for the motion and deserves recommendation to government, and Cabinet will be abstaining.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will allow the mover of the motion to conclude with his closing comments. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent of the motion is to be proactive. I am calling the government that we have to get down to Ottawa. We have to talk to the federal Ministers of Finance and Human Resources and Development to let them know that our government does not support their initiative at all. If we're not heard, we will never be heard at all. It's often been said that with Legislatures silence is assent. It means if we don't say anything, we agree with it. So this motion is calling on our government to speak to our federal counterparts and let them know that our Northwest Territories, the MLAs on this side of the House do not agree with any changes to the Old Age Security system. As well, I would hope our Cabinet will develop a policy when they deal with the federal government. Thank you. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'd like to call for a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Blake, Mr. Dolynny, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Legislative Assembly recorded vote results: in favour, 10; abstentions, 7. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MOTION 3-17(2): ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES SECRETARIAT, CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act recognizes nine Aboriginal languages as official languages, including: Chipewyan, Cree, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tlicho, in addition to English and French;

AND WHEREAS Section 11 of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act says, among other things, that any member of the public is entitled to communicate with and receive services from any regional or community Government of the Northwest Territories office in an Aboriginal language spoken in that region or community, where there is significant demand;

AND WHEREAS Aboriginal language speakers who are attempting to access government services such as medical treatment are sometimes forced to depend on relatives who speak their language, but who are not trained as interpreters and who cannot translate specialized terminology, resulting in worry and possible misinformation for patients;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories formerly recognized the need for a central body to provide Aboriginal language services by establishing a territorial Language Bureau;

AND WHEREAS the Language Bureau served the people of the Northwest Territories for nearly 25 years, with expert interpreter-translators who conducted research on specialized terminology and writing systems, as well as providing interpreter-translator services;

AND WHEREAS the Language Bureau was disbanded in 1997, eliminating 20 positions which have never been replaced;

AND WHEREAS qualified interpreter-translators in private business are not always available in Northwest Territories communities;

AND WHEREAS there are no longer any formal training programs for interpreter-translators in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS there is no central body monitoring the quality of Aboriginal language interpretation and translation;

AND WHEREAS there is no central clearing house for research on specialized medical or legal terminology or writing systems;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Government Operations in its report tabled in this House on May 28, 2009, called for the establishment of a secretariat as a central agency to develop government services in the Aboriginal languages and conduct long-term planning;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories in its Aboriginal Languages Plan tabled in this House on October 27, 2010, called for the establishment of a secretariat with responsibility for oversight of GNWT Aboriginal language services;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories has now established a Secretariat for Francophone Affairs;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Government of the Northwest Territories consult and develop interim measures to improve Aboriginal language services, with the full involvement of existing interpreter-translators in the Northwest Territories communities who speak different dialects;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories consult and develop interim measures to improve Aboriginal language services, with the full involvement of existing interpreter-translators in the Northwest Territories communities who speak different dialects;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories seek such additional funds as may be required for the secretariat for Aboriginal language services from the federal government, as a matter of urgent necessity and equity;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion. I will allow Mr. Yakeleya to comment on the motion.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion is restating what the Minister talked about

earlier in the House, to support and give the nudge to the government that this is a priority. People in the communities would really appreciate this, because this would give justice to our people when we have Ministers, bureaucrats or any other government agencies that come into our communities. They know they will get the proper information, the terminology will be right and these translators would do great justice to the Aboriginal language services, to the Aboriginal Languages Act.

Right now it will give more weight and this government will not only pay lip service, but when we have official meetings of this government for the people, that the people can feel comfortable enough to say we want to say it in our own language and we don't need to have a hit and miss on the interpretation. It's being properly translated the way we want to do it.

So this motion here speaks to having a secretariat developed, again establishing the Government of the Northwest Territories, and to know that if they say language is important to the people of the Northwest Territories, this motion is putting the money into the mouth of the government, so important that we're going to establish a secretariat for the Government of the Northwest Territories to recognize all the different Aboriginal languages and give respect and dignity to those languages. Then when we go back into the communities, the older people, the elders, people who want to hang on to their languages will know that this government really is working towards providing this service, other than just having English spoken in our communities. They can feel comfortable enough to go to the hospitals or the health centres and know that proper terminology will be used, or they can go to the legal system, a special facility or courts, whatever programs Justice has, even the RCMP, and know that these services are going to be provided.

So this is giving a nudge to the government and we'll see how this motion plays out in the next four years. We'll see if we continue to get lip service or if there is actually going to be some work done on this. Let's see how strong this motion is with this Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Mr. Yakeleya for his motion. Last term, when I was chair of Government Operations, we reviewed the Official Languages Act. I was very pleased to hear about the languages secretariat at that time. What happened is it stimulated and supported our Aboriginal languages throughout the Northwest Territories. There was a significant decline in support for our Aboriginal languages once that department was disbanded. It was also said, even to this day, that the best support for

languages are those employees who are in other departments to this day. I'm with Mr. Yakeleya in that I believe that we should and must consolidate our languages again into one department so that we can continue to support it and build on it for the benefit of all the people in the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** [English translation not provided.]

In terms of this motion, Mr. Speaker, I speak in favour and support it. As Dene, we are an oral society. We have legends, stories and histories that go back thousands of years. In some respects our elders play a very prominent role in educating our people in terms of the youngsters and youth in our communities. For some time it's been concerning me that government has a policy they call the Official Languages Act, but I believe more needs to be done. At the same time I also acknowledge that it can't only just be government, but equally so it has to be parents and families and communities that take the strong initiative to ensure that our languages survive and are enhanced and become more strongly prevalent in the communities. For those reasons today, I will speak in favour of the motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be speaking in favour of this particular motion. Mr. Menicoche mentioned about the work done last term. I was on that committee as well. We heard a lot from people about the challenges before them about their languages. I believe the re-establishment of the Language Bureau is probably one of the most needed steps out there to help support these language groups.

I often believe that languages to survive need to be relevant, and to be relevant they need to be supported. Many of the challenges we heard in the communities when we travelled was medical terminology and justice terminology. We cannot forget the fact that modern day terminology constantly evolves. By way of example, when I say that although my wife doesn't speak an Aboriginal language, she speaks a Chinese one, and how quickly they are to grasp on modern technology, and they define it themselves, and create it themselves and it becomes part of their language, these modern names. I think that's one of the things that this Language Bureau would say, is wait a minute, we don't have a word for this, we will develop a word for this. As they develop words, they also make the language relevant, which is meaningful to the young people who have to learn this. They need to learn this. A Language Bureau would set up a criteria, work with Aboriginal elders and build a foundation that can be reinforced and

built upon. It would be the buttress of what languages need. Right now they're by themselves and they don't have that type of support.

The other element of this is, once the Language Bureau is re-established, I certainly support further integration of Aboriginal languages within our schools and it must be enhanced. If a child can't go to the store and buy a jug of milk in their own Aboriginal language, even being able to say what the word "milk" is – if they're not using it in their own language, and not using it in their daily lives, and they're not using it in the home – it's just a sad case that we have this state before us of which they are significantly declining.

In short, this motion I think is the foundation of where we need to go to help build upon the existing state of our languages. The sad state is they are declining. This is the reinforcement I believe they need.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, stand here in favour of the motion that my colleague Mr. Yakeleya has presented before us. Language is the foundation of our traditions and cultures. It's the starting point where we start moving forward, and to continue to keep our traditions and cultures thriving and growing in our communities.

Right now the data shows that our languages are depleting, near extinction for some of the languages, and those need to be addressed. Furthermore, there are other languages that are on the borderline. Those are the ones that we need to take notice of now, before they come into those areas of concern, which we don't want to happen.

I'm in favour of this motion, and I hope that government proceeds and we can start taking action so that, like I said, one day some of the Members in here can do a Member's statement in their own language, and same with the Ministers.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion as well. I support diversity in all its ways, and one of the biggest ways that we are really strong in, particularly in the Northwest Territories, is our diversity of cultures and languages. There is so much knowledge and ways of seeing the world that we need that are wrapped up in languages, that we need to do whatever we can to help these languages survive and thrive. I back up my colleague from the Deh Cho, noting that there's a big role for families, and parents and elders in this role.

There's no doubt now, based on the new science, that the potential for learning language is most strongly developed within the few months before birth and 12 months after birth. There's a clearer indication of the need to focus on early childhood opportunities, and I know the department is working, the government is working in some ways there in terms of the Language Nests to function on young people, but it really needs to happen in the home and the community itself. I think this motion will move us in that direction, and on that basis I support the motion and thank my colleagues for bringing it forward.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Merci, M. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

...for bringing forward today what I think is an important motion, which I'll be voting in favour. I started off in my native tongue of French, and not because I feel confident that I have a secretariat in French, but moreover that I know there's security in my language moving forward. I think, in essence, this is what this motion is looking at, is security.

Not to reiterate what we've heard today from some of the Members here, we talked about the importance from the justice system, the medical system, which I think is utterly important. We talked about culture. I want to just hone in on that culture piece a little bit. We need to preserve our Aboriginal languages. They are unique and irreplaceable. They are, in essence, part of our global heritage that we have to maintain. Aboriginal identities are tied to their languages, and without language we are putting cultures at risk, not just language.

We are identified as Northerners by our languages. We should be proud of that uniqueness on a global scale. Our Aboriginal languages are every bit part of our nationalism that need to be preserved. We need to preserve this language of our people. We need to keep these languages alive and useful; otherwise, our own identity as Northerners could be lost forever. When they're lost forever, they will not come back.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

I would just like to say thank you to the Members on this motion. This initiative is already in the works with my Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We're already proceeding with this. A proposal for the creation of the Aboriginal languages secretariat will be brought forward for consideration in 2012-2013 business planning session. We will continue our efforts to seek increased funding from the federal government

through the negotiation of a multi-year Language Funding Agreement. I look forward to continuing to work with the Members on establishment of the Aboriginal languages secretariat, and thank them for their support in our consistent lobbying of the federal government to increase funding in this important area.

As this is a recommendation to the government, Cabinet will abstain from voting.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I'll allow closing comments to Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said at the beginning of this motion here, this motion is to support, to nudge the government on the establishment. It talks about some of the things that we think can be looked at when you start developing this secretariat. Not just two people, maybe 15 people or so. Give you some ideas.

I know you're going to come back in the future on this secretariat. We don't know when. Monies are introduced and monies sometimes disappear. We want to put this on the radar for the government, that this is an important enough issue here that it stays within the books with the finances. It's not something we can willy and dilly and take it out. This motion here is so serious that we have to bring up a motion to say keep going, keep doing what you have to do, put the proper resources in there.

When my mother was alive, she worked with the community health representative for over 30 years. She was translating for somebody in the hospital, after 30 years of working in the health centre, and she said that she didn't understand how to translate certain internal organs of a patient. She had a tough time. This is after 30 years, growing up in the bush, coming off and speaking the language really well. The doctor came in, made the assumption, assumed you know what I'm talking about. My mom said, you know what? I've been here over 30 years, the doctor said this and he just expected I do this. How dare he did that to my mother. But my mom said, that's my job. She tried to explain to the elder what the doctor wanted to know about that part in his body. She couldn't get it.

The story here is that my Mom phoned a dear friend in Fort Simpson, Albertine Rowe, and said, how do you translate this in South Slavey? The doctor wants to know. How do I translate that to the elder? Albertine said – God bless her heart – well, look at it like when we skin a moose and take the moose apart. We have words for the inside organs for moose, just like a human being. If you tell that to the hunter, the old man, because he's skinned so many moose in his life, he would know what you're talking about and that's the part you're talking about inside his body. My mom said, okay. So that's what she did.

I guess that's what we're asking about: specific terminology for our people. That's what our people want through the secretariat. Give them the dignity of first peoples on this land. This is their land and their language is their culture and it's their heart. That's who they are. If we do it no less than that, we're doing a disservice to our people. That's what I'm saying. Our people's voices are strong and powerful. So strong. Very, very strong. We don't have this secretariat to help the government, us, honour their language and we're not doing any service to them. We've got to put it back in. That's why we wanted to nudge the government with this secretariat. Let's do that. Let's honour and recognize the culture of the Aboriginal people, or the French people, as my friend has talked about. Let's be equals amongst us here. Our language is our future.

I ask for a recorded vote on this.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

**HONOURARY TABLE OFFICER (Mr. Whitford):** Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Mr. Dolynny, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

**HONOURARY TABLE OFFICER (Mr. Whitford):** Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Jacobson – no.

---Laughter

**MR. SPEAKER:** No problem. The recorded vote: all those in favour, 10; all those opposed, zero; abstentions, seven.

---Carried

Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger

#### First Reading of Bills

BILL 3:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 3, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 3 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 4:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 4 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

#### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 3:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 3, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 3 has had second reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 4:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 4 has had second reading.

---Carried

Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole on bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 3:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 3, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 3 has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 4:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 4 has had third reading.

---Carried

Colleagues, today we will conclude the Second Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Although this has been a fairly short sitting, it's been jam packed with meetings, briefings, legislation and your constituency work. I see that you have met over breakfast, lunch and a few dinners, putting in very long days to get the job done.

I know our constituents don't often see that side of our work as Members here at the Legislative Assembly. For those of us from outside of Yellowknife, our time here is filled with work related to the Assembly agenda. We have to take advantage of the time that we are here, and that means we have very busy and long days as Members.

I want to thank all the Pages who have helped us during this session. They make our jobs easier and I hope they enjoy their experiences here at the Assembly as much as we enjoy having them here.

I'd also like to take the opportunity, on behalf of all Members, to say good luck to those competing in the Arctic Winter Games which are taking place in Whitehorse, Yukon, this coming March. The Arctic Winter Games is a special celebration of sport and cultural values in northern regions around the world.

To the NWT athletes who are participating: You are all winners in our eyes! Good luck and enjoy your experience.

I don't want to forget all the volunteers who trained and supported our athletes here in the Northwest Territories. Support from folks like that makes our games so successful. Thank you all for your efforts that you do for our youth.

By the time we meet again, colleagues, when this House returns in May, it will certainly be spring and that's goose hunting, usually, for us back home, but we'll be here. It will certainly be spring. Already the days are longer and the sun is stronger. As you return to your homes and families, I hope you are able to take some time and enjoy them, enjoy our northern spring. Get out and hunt and fish, or just get out on the land and put your work here in this Legislative Assembly into perspective and who we work for.

I wish you all safe travels. As you leave today, I look forward to seeing you back in the Chamber in May. Safe travels to all your families. If you have any problems, call me.

Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable George Tuccaro, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills and prorogue the Second Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

### Prorogation

**COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. George Tuccaro):** Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the recent passing of three prominent Northerners. I acknowledge the passing of a former Member of this Legislative Assembly, a former scholar, activist and politician, Robert Williamson, who passed away at the age of 80 on Sunday, February 12, 2012. Mr. Williamson was the first elected Member for the then newly formed Keewatin riding, later known as the Central Arctic riding, and was a Member of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Assemblies of the Northwest Territories Council from 1966 to 1970.

I will also acknowledge Bishop John Sperry and Ken Look, a friend and former colleague from my time as a CBC broadcaster.

These three fine gentlemen were well respected and each contributed so much to the development and to the social fabric of the North. On behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, I extend our sincere condolences to the families of Bishop Sperry, Mr. Look and Mr. Williamson.

This year is the Diamond Jubilee for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada. Our celebrations of this special anniversary will include public events to be planned throughout the year, as well as taking part in the national Diamond Jubilee Medal program.

We have information about how to nominate someone for the Diamond Jubilee Medal program, photos and jubilee activities across the territory. You will find all of this on the GNWT's website; just click on the Queen's jubilee banner. For those of you without access to a computer, please contact my office.

I wish each of the Members of this House safe travels and a busy, productive time as you continue to work for the people of the Northwest Territories.

#### ASSENT TO BILLS

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act;
- Bill 2, Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013;
- Bill 3, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012;
- Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012.

Prior to proroguing this Second Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, I wish to announce that the Third Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly will convene on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the Second Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, mahsi cho, qanani, koana.

---PROROGATION

The House prorogued at 1:22 p.m.